

REMARKS

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, rejected claims 1-73 are cancelled, leaving only allowed claims 74-87 pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request entry of the present amendment because entry of this amendment will place the application in condition for allowance, with pending allowed claims 74-87. Claims 74-87 were allowed by the Examiner in the final office action dated April 28, 2004, to which this amendment after final office action is responsive.

Claims 1-15, 18, and 20-73 have been canceled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 1-15, 18, and 20-73 are rendered moot by the present amendment canceling claims 1-15, 18, and 20-73.

Applicants have filed herewith a Notice of Appeal for the purpose of maintaining pendency of the present application should the examiner not issue a Notice of Allowance prior to the end of the statutory period for response to the final office action dated April 28, 2004. Upon issuance of a Notice of Allowance, Applicants respectfully withdraw the Notice of Appeal, and request that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office pass the application to issue.

CONCLUSION

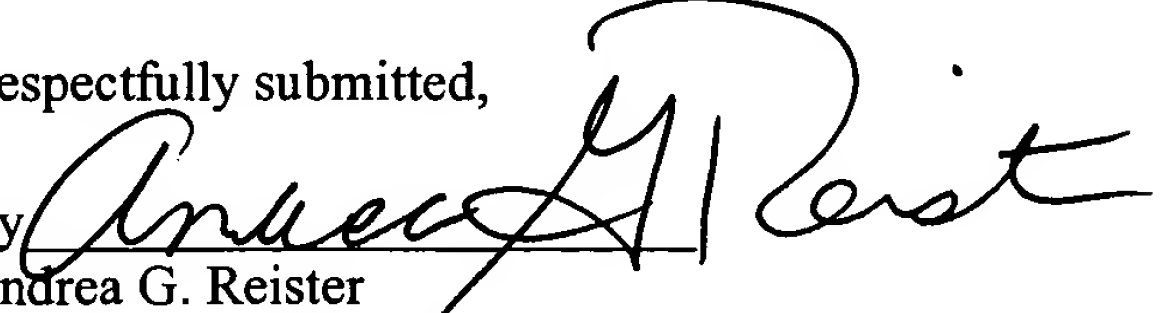
Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing remarks demonstrate that entry of these amendments places the present application in condition for allowance, and in better form for consideration on appeal. All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Dated: July 27, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By


Andrea G. Reister

Registration No. 36,253

COVINGTON & BURLING

1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20004-2401

(202) 662-6000

Attorney for Applicant